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ABSTRACT

A survey of spring 2001 non-enrollees at Boise State University completed by 247 applicants who did not enroll found that students generally changed their mind about attending due to work schedules or the costs of attending. Family responsibilities were also an issue for many students. The admissions process was perceived as very satisfactory, although students who attempted to register on the Web were often very frustrated. To better serve student needs, respondents suggested more classes in general, particularly during evenings and weekends. Off-campus classes, especially Internet classes, were a popular suggestion. Parking was an issue for these students. Four appendixes contain the survey and lists of student reasons for not attending. (SLD)

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Research Reports

Institutional Assessment
Boise State University

Why don't students attend Boise State despite having applied and been admitted?

Research Report 2001 – 03
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Boise State University
June 2001

Abstract

A survey of spring 2001 non-enrollees found that students generally changed their minds about attending due to work schedules or the costs of attending. Family responsibilities were also an issue for many students.

The admissions process was perceived as very satisfactory, but students who attempted to then register on the web were often frustrated. A majority of students who attempted to register had neither attended orientation nor received advising.

To better serve student needs, respondents suggested more classes in general, particularly during evenings and weekends. Off-campus classes especially internet classes were also a popular suggestion. Parking, of course, was another issue with students.

Why don't students attend Boise State despite having applied and been admitted?

Each year a number of students apply to Boise State. Most are admitted. Still, a number fail to enroll. For new freshmen, about 85% of applicants are admitted, and of those admitted, slightly more than 60% enroll. What causes the other 40% of students to fail to follow through with their educational plans?

In order to better understand the reasons that students do not attend Boise State University despite having applied and been admitted, a short survey was administered during the Spring 2001 term. Developed by Barbara Fortin, Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Brian Newkirk of the Graduate College, Mark Wheeler, Dean of Enrollment Services, and Marcia Belcheir of the Office of Institutional Assessment, the survey included common reasons for not enrolling and several questions on the quality of service encountered during the admissions and registration process. The survey concluded with an open-

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ended question where students were asked to identify how Boise State could better serve their needs and increase the likelihood of their attendance.

The survey was mailed to 1,327 students who applied and were admitted but did not enroll. A total of 247 responses or 18.6% were received from a single mailing of the survey. About half the respondents said that they were planning on pursuing an undergraduate degree, and an additional 25% simply wanted to take undergraduate courses of interest to them. The remaining fourth planned to pursue a graduate degree (16%) or take graduate courses of interest (9%). Almost 70% of those returning the survey were female, a percentage somewhat higher than that found for enrolled students.

Reasons for Not Enrolling

The following table illustrates the percentage selecting each reason for not attending. As previously reported from a survey of non-returning students (RR 97-03), the main reasons for not enrolling were work conflicts and lack of funds. Family responsibilities also played a sizeable role.

Table 1. Reasons why students did not enroll

Reason:	Percent who gave this reason	
	Undergraduates	Graduates
I had a conflict with my work schedule	40.46	37.93
I could not afford it	34.10	32.76
I had family responsibilities that conflicted	21.97	20.69
Other reason	21.39	24.14
I tried but could not register for the classes I wanted	13.29	10.34
I chose to attend another college[1]	10.40	6.90
I was worried about parking	9.83	6.90
I was unable to receive financial aid in time	9.25	12.07
I moved outside the area	2.89	0.00
I had problems transferring credits from another school	2.31	3.45
I did not understand what I was supposed to do	1.16	1.72
I decided I didn't want to go to college	0.58	3.45

Other reasons that students gave are listed in Appendix A. While the reasons were diverse, lack of classes appeared to be the main theme. A secondary theme was illness.

Satisfaction with the Admissions Process

Respondents were generally pleased with the admissions process. Overall, at least 95% were satisfied with the process of obtaining an application, working with admissions to complete their

[1] Of the 16 undergraduates who listed another college, 4 selected ISU, 3 selected TVCC, and 2 each selected CSI and Eastern Oregon University. Of the 5 graduate students, 2 selected UI. All other colleges were only mentioned once.

files, and notification that they had been admitted (see Table 2). In addition, a number of students commented on how well it had worked to apply on-line. For comments, see Appendix B.

Table 2. Ratings of the Admissions Process by Level

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total Grp
Obtaining the application for admission was:			
Quick and convenient (please explain)	65.3	44.8	60.0
Satisfactory	30.5	46.6	34.7
Slow	3.0	5.2	3.6
Difficult (please explain)	1.2	3.4	1.8
Total Percent:	100.0	100.0	100.0
Working with admissions staff to complete my file (application transcripts, test scores, etc.) was:			
Excellent (please explain)	33.5	36.4	34.3
Good	44.1	36.4	42.1
Satisfactory	18.6	25.5	20.4
Difficult (please explain)	3.7	1.8	3.2
Total Percent:	100.0	100.0	100.0
Notification of admission and accompanying information about new student orientation, registration, etc. was:			
Excellent (please explain)	32.3	19.6	29.1
Good	50.6	55.6	51.8
Satisfactory	14.6	21.4	16.4
Difficult (please explain)	2.4	3.6	2.7
Total Percent:	100.0	100.0	100.0

Satisfaction with the Registration Process

About half of the students who were admitted also attempted to register before eventually failing to enroll. Of these, very few students attended orientation (only 17% of undergraduates and 23% of graduates). In addition, only about 30% of undergraduates and 50% of graduates received advice about classes prior to registering. Only about one-fourth registered for classes using the internet, and more than half of this group found the process frustrating. When asked to comment on their difficulties, a number of students indicated that their problems were (1) full classes, (2) difficulty with prerequisites which respondents said had been fulfilled at another college, or (3) passwords that didn't work. See Appendix C for further details on comments.

Recommendations to Better Serve Needs and Increase Likelihood of Attending

The top recommendation students had was to increase the number of classes and/or offer them during the evenings and weekends (N=22). The second more frequent recommendation also had to do with classes: students wanted more classes off-campus (N=15). Suggestions on where the classes should be located ranged from the internet to Micron to Mountain Home, but the most

frequent suggestion was internet courses. In third place was parking—students wanted more of it at reduced costs (N=14). Other recommendations mentioned by at least four people were: providing more contact with advisors or counselors (N=13), reducing the cost of attending (N=12), providing more or better information on majors and course offerings (N=9), eliminating rude faculty and staff and providing better customer service (N=5),and modifying the admissions and/or registration process (e.g., need to reapply) (N=4). The full text of recommendations can be found in Appendix D.

Summary

Each semester a number of admitted students fail to take the final step and enroll at Boise State. A survey sent to these students in the Spring of 2001 was designed to find out why these students didn't enroll and what improvements Boise State might make in increase their probability of enrolling in the future.

Problems with work schedules and money were the two main reasons that respondents indicated that they did not enroll. Family responsibilities were a third reason.

Students were generally very pleased with the admissions process. While everyone experienced admissions, registration was experienced by only half of the respondents. When students did register, they typically had neither attended orientation nor received advising. A small group tried to register on the Web and were often frustrated by the experience. Lack of class availability also seemed to be a registration issue.

As a result, students recommended scheduling more courses, especially at non-traditional times like evenings and weekends. They also encouraged the university to provide more courses off the main campus, especially through the internet. Gaining access to information through advising and improving parking were also frequent suggestions.

Results of this survey indicate that most of the "no-shows" are due to problems in respondents' lives. There is little the university can do about job schedules and costs, except to offer more courses at times and venues which appeal to working students. A minority of students, however, indicate that Boise State personnel were perceived as rude and unhelpful. This characterization covered faculty as well as administrative staff. This is certainly an area under control of the university and capable of improvement.

Appendix A
Other Reasons Students Gave for Not Enrolling by Undergraduate or Graduate Admissions Level

Level not Indicated

- I did not apply in time
- The bank knew that my Mother was going to die on January 22, 2001 and did not tell me and refused my tuition request.
- Had a baby

Undergraduates

- Too far of a drive
- Got a job and just wanted to attend Fall 2001
- Church conflict
- The process takes too long and I never get the definite answer to my question. I always transfer to one department to another to get the answer. I don't mind if I live in Boise, but I fly all the way
- In another state found it difficult to get my questions answered
- Finishing up generals to take classes at BSU
- Still in the army
- I missed registration
- Decided to go straight into a graduate program.
- Classes I needed not offered during the Spring semester 2001
- I moved
- Taking on-line course through the University of SC
- Conflict between payment on old loan and not able to get a new one with satisfactory requirements
- Out of state tuition is to expensive and even though I live 100 ft from Idaho, no consideration was taken.
- I went to register for the class. Parking attendant wanted $2.00 to park for 10 minutes. I left because I decided nothing had changed at BSU. If you're office is open for registering students, why you…
- Wanted correspondence classes to get core credits out of the way before attending full time.
- Ballet Idaho
- Transcripts did not get there in time for financial aid
- Going for 2nd undergraduate, but classes I needed I could not get into. I was told to just get into any classes I could to get "back into the system" I can't afford to take classes just for that reason
- was waiting for Fall
- car had mechanical failure
- Health Problems
- Possibly changing degrees
- classes were not available until fall
- Didn't offer the class I wanted

- I decided to take a break for a semester after 11 month PN program
- I registered for continuing education classes directly related with my employment, but they were canceled. D___ it!
- I did enroll in Driver ed.
- something about out of state tuition even though I've lived in Idaho for 4 years.
- I was going to take two classes offered by my employer but two weeks after classes started at BSU those classes were canceled.
- My schedule did not permit the time expenditure
- Unable to get class I wanted - full
- Class canceled
- Had not made up my mind in time. Application was not received timely.
- I got the tuition waiver at ISU
- Want to take web design classes and found out they're not part of the BSU curriculum
- My move from Salt Lake City to Boise was postponed for six months
- Illness - for 6-7 weeks at start of semester
- Birth of a child

Graduate

- See below
- Procrastinated
- Terrible, terrible customer service, from every administrative person I went to for help. It was very disappointing.
- Grad program only starts in fall.
- internet fee for out of state was exorbitant.
- I as denied by the art program
- Thinking about moving
- Employee waited too long to approve training request
- NSU was able to coordinate out of state needs with course requirements
- classes filled before registration appointment
- My doctors asked me to wait to attend college because of the head trauma caused by the wreck I was in 6-2-00
- I chose to put off one year
- My mother-in-law was very sick (terminal) with cancer. I ended up caring for her Jan-Feb. She passed away at the end of February.
- illness
- My advisor could not tell me what classes to take

Appendix B

Explanations of Ratings of the Admissions Process by Level

No Level Indicated

- I applied over the internet
- Registered on line admission letter received within 7 days, plus a phone call received making sure I received letter and understood
- Called two times for financial aid but did not get it sent to me.
- I registered on-line on Thanksgiving weekend and admittance on Tuesday! WOW!

Undergraduate

- It was a fast process.
- Everything was easy
- I was able to re-apply very easily
- Staff was very helpful and answered all of my questions.
- One set calendar for all admin, events instead of a new mailing each week/every other week
- Received everything in mail in timely manner
- Friendly and professional service/received information within 3 days. Great service.
- I wanted information regarding your RN program received an LPN package "I am a LPN"
- The application process was great. The staff were all very helpful.
- I'm listed as a non-resident-I've lived in Idaho since 1993
- I was registered 3 years ago and applied again and was told I was already accepted within a few weeks
- Times conflicted with my work schedule so I was unable to attend.
- All materials arrived in the mail quickly as did my response on admissions.
- It was extremely easy being admitted. The people were friendly and helpful.
- Didn't have any problems with anything all was received on time.
- Information was sent to me immediately.
- Everything flowed smoothly
- Quick and Easy
- I needed information on a legal course that was offered at the Nampa site in the evenings
- online - was pretty easy
- I obtained my application over the internet.
- On the internet-that was ___
- No problems or delays
- Before I even thought I needed something it was send to me.
- Received appointment promptly upon request so didn't really work with anyone, did it on my own
- Web sites for graduate admin were not working
- The application for admission was very simple and therefore it was a "quick and convenient" process

- Getting information was difficult, I would get transferred several times before getting an answer.
- very prompt
- I never worked with the admissions staff
- Even though I had already completed a Degree (through BSU) I was told I needed to apply as a "new" student and could not get classes I needed to continue.
- No one wanted to take the time to completely answer my questions or to assist me with getting started.
- Everyone was nice and organized making the process easy
- I did things over the internet
- BSU representative at Micron is very helpful
- Internet
- The BSU office at CSI was very helpful
- Applications were send within days, admissions staff referred to one department while that department referred me back to admissions. A woman in the admissions office said that she would file my name
- You have your student orientations during work hours.
- I received all needed information quickly via the mail. Thank you.
- My application was processed quickly and I received excellent admission information
- I obtained the application and filled it out online
- Every person I contacted was helpful in evaluating my transcript and specifying the courses I need to pursue my goals.
- Quick and courteous very informative
- Picked up the application at the Education Center at Mtn. Home AFB with Sarah Murray
- They thought I wasn't current and charged me a fee they later refunded.
- The staff at the Canyon County facility was very helpful. The application was easy and quick to fill out.
- Since I have done this before, I knew what to expect
- As soon as I tried to get going on my registration all needs were met quickly and conveniently.
- Had appointment with new student coordinator - every form I needed was there.
- Went smooth and was not a problem to complete
- Just walked in and picked up the application in the Admin. Building
- It seemed a bit ridiculous to have to re-apply for an interest class when I had already graduated.

<u>Graduate Level</u>

- On-line registration was quite easy
- I have attended BSU for five years, unable to attend full-time, I took one semester off and when I tried to start up the following semester I was treated as if I never existed. Having to go to a new s
- Graduate program secretary for the College of Ed was very helpful
- On-line and U.S. mail were efficient
- You sent me an appointment for orientation in a pretty good time frame.

- on-line is quick & easy
- File complete did not work with staff
- quick and convenient: internet; admissions staff: friendly, offered additional information; notification: timely
- I never received any notification until two months prior to attend, which made it impossible to attend for the classes I wanted.
- Everything they helped me with was good and on time.
- I registered on-line and later called to confirm that all required transcripts were received.
- #4. internet access - quick and convenient.
- They were very friendly and professional and are willing to work with student.

Appendix C
Comments on the Registration Process by Level

Level not indicated:

- But I would have, if I had attended.

Undergraduates:

- Not user friendly at ALL!
- My husband and I both find it very difficult, especially if we have questions or need a signature to get into a class.
- I need one class to apply to the nursing program, class was not offered during the Spring Semester 2001
- I forgot to register
- Class I wanted was already full before I was allowed to register
- I went to office to register but couldn't. Admission paperwork should state, "you may not register before your appointed date."
- Only chose to attend Eastern Oregon University due to family living in the area. This gave me a cheaper place to stay.
- Finding an application was easy because they are available in many places.
- Did not attend in Spring
- I was accepted into the social work program in 1998, I tried to register but they said they lost my file.
- Tried to sign up for correspondence - no luck.
- Tried to register but was not allowed due to pre-requisites. I have met the pre-requisites at another university.
- I talked to a faculty member of the department I would have been attending. They were rude and unorganized
- was applying to take a class in Music (piano) the classes were full. In the fall I would like to register for French and/or short story writing and I am a senior citizen.
- Could not view on-line class availability
- It would have been nice if I could have contacted the instructor or could have put my name on a waiting list in case there would have been openings in the class during the first week of classes.
- Having more varied schedule for undergraduate
- Was unable to register for classes already full. Not one that I needed was available.
- My ID# didn't work; not sure if was because it was after my registration date.
- I tried but class was full
- A little frustrating didn't tell me why I couldn't get the class - just said I wasn't able to.
- Bronco web didn't allow me to look up classes unless I knew the exact section number
- tried - not successful
- But, I am looking forward to registration on-line (very good)

Graduate:

- Faculty required more information than I could acquire before registering for class.
- Did not attempt to register
- attempted
- I was prepared to do so until I was informed of the price.
- After receiving the letter from you saying that I wouldn't be able to use Financial Aid, I couldn't afford to go this semester, I didn't really understand what to do after that.
- The password I was given wasn't accepted. I had to call your staff to understand
- The information orientation session I felt was not worth my time.
- I was late registering anyway and then I was turned down for not having the pre-requisite which I really did have from my former college.
- Class was full at the time of my registration.
- Not enough internet classes offered.
- #5 admission staff were great to answer questions and send information quickly - Thanks!

Appendix D
Comments on how Boise State could better serve student needs and increase the likelihood of attending

Level not indicated:

- getting a graduate program for pure chemistry
- Having more classes available weekend and evenings for working students.
- I just want to take one class per semester, but it is cost prohibitive right now. If I return I need to sit down with someone who can look at the classes I've attended and recommend classes for the fu
- Confirming that I could enter teacher certification track.
- Having more than I education advisor

Undergraduate:

- More parking, more 2 day classes to work around work schedules.
- I am currently finishing a Bachelor's degree through EDU and would possibly pursue a Masters at BSU.
- Boise State has been great and doesn't need to do anything. I plan to attend school in Spring 2002 at BSU.
- Everything was fine, I just didn't have the money or time to take the classes I wanted.
- Having a bit more flexibility with counseling hours.
- Having more upper division classes available at the Nampa campus or in evening.
- Reducing the price per credit for part-time students
- Treating students more politely especially there is a lady from CIS department who is also an instructor.
- Out of state students have a difficult time speaking with staff, I would like to know more about RN program.
- Lowering fees on admission, parking and books
- Nothing, BSU is an excellent school and I am happy to be attending.
- Acquiring more diverse Associate degrees - interior design, etc.
- Late registration
- Offering more classes at Micron Technology
- Helping with later times for orientation with counselors for setting up a schedule
- Having a professional looking website. When I was looking for possible college choices BSU's was the worst looking.
- Help me pay for school.
- By giving me a scholarship
- Making credits less expensive. More evening classes for biology.
- Better parking arrangements.
- Offering more classes at night!!!
- Sending me all the information and benefits of returning adult student programs tutoring and organizational classes for adults who have not been in school for a while.
- Being patient and understanding of my work schedule.

- Taking into consideration your financial situation on financial aid rather than going by on what you make alone.
- Have information needed for the course I want to take at Nampa site.
- Better parking
- At my age, classes on the net or off campus would work much better for me.
- I hope they find my file and that I won't have to re-apply to the Social Work dept. I plan on following up on this.
- More personal contact from advisors.
- Opening more sections of classes closed in the first few weeks.
- If that faculty member wasn't as rude as he was I would have attended your school.
- Any problems I had were from my end and not the universities. I have no suggestions at this time.
- Letting the residency be 6 months instead of 12 in order to get in as a resident.
- I would love to attend classes for fun at BSU, but I'm constantly reminded of the irritation I experienced as an undergraduate. Admin needs to get it's act together. If BSU had competitors in Boise,
- More information on financial aid/scholarships for returning (older students)
- Having classes in the morning and early afternoon at the mountain home AFB branch.
- Offering correspondence classes for people who work 40 + hours
- Having weekend classes
- Offering more evening and weekend classes
- They filled up before Freshmen register....
- providing more internet classes
- offering courses over the internet
- I received different answers from several individuals (school of business, registrars, etc.)
- Offering more science classes in late afternoon evening internet classes
- Offer study courses for class placement
- Nothing
- Having more sections of popular classes - there were at least 6 sections of the class I wanted (ed 202) and all were full when I tried to register.
- Having better parking needs for students. The parking is bad.
- Providing more classes at Micron
- New student help to be in the right classes and groups.
- Increase free parking space available and offer more weekending night courses
- Being organized. It doesn't seem to help if I call an office during business hours because there is no answer, it seems that staff prefer to avoid being helpful. Too many people at BSU are rude and I...
- Lowering tuition fees! Smile (it was worth a try...)
- Having classes offered at more times. Also, more available classes @ Canyon County. Parking.
- Making the parking situation better, more convenient
- Free schooling and free beer
- More evening classes for working personnel

- Let me talk to and obtain an advisor for human resources. Instead of just general business at below Jr. level.
- Offering more sections, especially during non-traditional times like evening, weekend or summer in Computer science.
- I did use Bronco Web to look up classes. You serve my needs just fine.
- Sending me information when a course did finalize and was offered.
- Please contact me when I can talk with a counselor to register for next semester and get a plan. Thanks. 922-2147
- Can't think of anything now.
- This questionnaire is great! I applaud your efforts to improve your "customer relations." I especially like that I won't have to go through the admissions process again when I want to take a class next
- Reducing the price of parking passes. Sending me all the materials needed to register including catalog and course schedule.
- If I got the tuition waiver. I would consider attending BSU
- Offering some of the physical activities classes in the evening
- Offering more undergraduate courses on the weekends! Overall, I am pleased with BSU. Unfortunately, I can only attend on the weekends. So please add more classes.
- Making web classes part of some type of degree providing financial aid for web design classes - free parking for off campus students. I love 50 miles away. More night classes.
- Offering classes that currently meet 4 days/week in a Tues-Thur format, e.g., calculus or offering them in evenings
- Letting transfer students know that transfer transcripts must be SEALED
- Allowing me to register at a time that's based on the number of credits I've accrued, regardless of the fact that I'm a returning student.
- Offering registration hours and advising information that is after working hours was great. Keep up the meeting the needs of the non-traditional student
- Better, cheaper parking, no admission lines, no need to re-apply for single interest class. Your staff is friendly and pleasant

Graduate level:

- Parking, parking, parking
- Increase funding for library. The library needs to buy more complete journal sets.
- Faculty was too busy to give me the support I needed (counseling on thesis)
- Offer education courses individually not in a block format
- Not possible, I have talked three people out of attending BSU because of my experience, I will do more when given the opportunity. Frankly, I am embarrassed that I attended. I know this information…
- Addressing the parking needs/costs for someone attending for 3 hours a week
- Offering classes in Mountain Home to complete teaching certificate and/or graduate coursework.
- Offering more night classes. Allowing graduate students seeking specific degrees first choice at classes.
- Eliminating out of state fee rates differential
- Parking both availability and cost (availability up, cost down)

- adding more internet/web based educational opportunities
- Helping me out with information on registering and picking classes. Basically what I need to do to attend.
- I have been impressed with BSU. I regret enrolling at U of I but had no other option for the PhD in education admin. program
- Those of us who need post graduate courses for state education requirements should not have to apply to grad school.
- Offering online courses or opportunities to independently complete prerequisites for lower level courses
- I am happy with the way BSU is ran, I do plan on attending this coming fall.
- Being more helpful and explaining better when asked questions they don't know about.
- Perhaps a careful transcript check to find the corresponding pre-requisite would help.
- Specifying internet classes in a separate category or differentiate from regular classes.
- Getting to attend school, I want to go to BSU
- More convenient parking and flexible class hours so that full time working students could attend full-time
- Tell me what classes I would need if transferring.
- Providing counselors who are correctly informed about majors, their requirements, and class selection
- Not assuming that everyone knows about college and how credits work
- Letting me know what classes I need

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